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MINERALS FROM PIKE'S PEAK.—Pike's Peak has already become famous for the number and beauty of the mineral species in its vicinity. Besides the extraordinary specimens of amazon-stone (microcline) from that locality, there have been found smoky quartz, albite, fluorite, biotite, siderophyllite, columbite, gothite, arfvedsonite, astrophyllite, zircon, limonite pseudomorphs, etc. Most of these occur in cavities in granite. Recently Messrs. W. Cross and W. F. Hillebrand have added several species, new to this locality. Several crystals of colorless or pale greenish *topaz* were found, one specimen being a fragment, which must have belonged to a crystal a foot in diameter. Two imperfect crystals of *phenacite* were found, this being the first locality known in the United States. *Cryolite*, *thomsenolite* and several undetermined species were also found.

MINERALOGICAL NOTES.—The *volcanic ash* ejected from Vesuvius during the eruption of February 25, 1882, has been analyzed by Ricciardi. The ash was black and magnetic. When heated, it gave off hydrochloric acid. It contained particles of magnetite and awgite, and numerous crystals of leucite. As shown by analysis, it also contained a small percentage of apatite. Sulphate and chloride of ammonium were also present, and could be dissolved out by water.

Mountain cork has been recently used in Germany as a substitute for animal charcoal for the removal of color from molasses. The mountain cork, a variety of amphibole, is dried, ignited and soaked in molasses, then again dried and ignited. This process is repeated several times until some 3.5 per cent. of carbon has become fixed in the mineral, which is then ready for use. It is more efficient than charcoal in removing the alkalies from molasses.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

DE BRAZZA'S EXPLORATIONS ON THE OGOWE AND THE CONGO.—At a recent meeting of the Geographical Society of Paris, M. Savorgnan de Brazza described his recent journeys in the territory between the Ogowé and Congo Rivers, of which, previously, few details had been known. He was directed by the French Government to trace the Alima River, discovered by him on his first expedition (1875-8), to its junction with the Congo and to establish stations on the Ogowé and the Congo.

M. de Brazza left France in December, 1879, ascended the Ogowé, and succeeded in negotiating with the tribes on its banks and establishing a regular system of transport on the river. He founded his first station, Franceville, at the confluence of the Passa with the Ogowé. From here in June, 1880, he dispatched 770 natives in 44 canoes to meet his coadjutor, Dr. Ballay, at the coast, and then started alone, with a small party of natives, for the Congo.

¹ Edited by ELLIS H. VARNALL, Philadelphia.

Two or three days journey from Franceville, the nature of the country changes. To the clayey soil of the Ogowé basin and its richly wooded and moist valleys succeeds a sandy, arid, and hilly country, with here and there, in the neighbourhood of a village, a group of palm trees. This is the aspect of the country which forms the water shed between the Ogowé and the tributaries of the Upper Congo; and it is a singular fact that these narrow sandy tracts of country, along the water's bed, are everywhere inhabited by one and the same tribe, the Batcké, reputed, probably erroneously, to be cannibals. When he had passed the Leketé, a southern branch of the Alima, his route lay across the plateau of the Achicuya, an elevated district lying about 2600 feet above the sea-level, and separated from another similar plateau (the Aboma) by the River Mpama. The chief of the Achicuya received M. de Brazza in a friendly manner, and a similar reception awaited him on reaching the Aboma tribe. These latter are a fine race of people, handsomer and braver than any he had yet met with. It was here that M de Brazza first received definite information regarding the Congo and the powerful chief Makoko, whose sovereignty the Aboma acknowledge. Leaving their district, the party next travelled along the Lefini River—the Lawson of Mr. Stanley. M. de Brazza had just finished constructing a raft for the navigation of the stream, when a messenger from King Makoko arrived with offers of friendship. This much facilitated his further proceedings. He descended the Lefini with the envoy as far as Nyampo, leaving there the raft and journeying by land for two days across an uninhabited table-land. His march over a sun-scorched plateau was most wearisome, and he was beginning to find fault with his guide, when at 11 o'clock at night, after a forced march, he came in sight of the Congo. It appeared like an immense sheet of water, the silvery sheen of which contrasted with the sombre hue of the lofty mountains around. Towards the north-east the water-line extended to the horizon, and the river swept in a noiseless, slow current past the foot of the hills beneath him.

From here he visited Makoko, who gave him a most friendly reception, and entertained him for twenty-five days. A treaty was finally concluded by which the king placed his states under the protection of France, and ceded a tract of country, to be selected by M. de Brazza, on the shores of the Congo. Another treaty was also arranged with the Ubanji, who appear to occupy the region between the Alima and Stanley Pool. The second French station was placed at Ntamo, on the left bank of Stanley Pool, which M. de Brazza considers the key to the Congo interior. Stanley Pool is 93 miles nearer to the Atlantic coast than is indicated on Stanley's map.

By these treaties and discoveries, M. de Brazza maintains that the rights of priority of the French nation are clearly established

over the region between the Ogowé, the Equator, and the Congo and over the tract of country on the southern bank of the Congo from Impila to the confluence of the River Djué, to the south of Stanley Pool.

The station at Ntamo was established on October 1, 1880, and named Brazzaville. Leaving the station in charge of a sergeant and three men, M. de Brazza tried to find a new route to the sea by the valley of the N'Duo, which empties itself into the Niari and leads from Ntamo to the coast in a nearly due westerly direction. He was obliged, however, to abandon this, and continue his journey down the Congo. He arrived at the Gaboon in December, 1880. Failing to find Dr. Ballay or any reinforcement for his expedition here, he again, for a third time, ascended the Ogowé and reached Franceville in February, 1881, where he found about 100 natives engaged in various industries and the settlement self-supporting. During the following six months preparations were made to transport a steamer, to be sent in sections, from France, from the Ogowé to the Alima—a path being cleared by 400 laborers. This steamer has, however, not yet reached the Ogowé.

In October, 1881, M. de Brazza set out from Franceville to endeavor again to explore the Niari valley route, from Stanley Pool to the Atlantic. He was more successful in this second attempt. The Niari proved to be a beautiful river which enters the Atlantic under the name of Quilliou, and flows for a long distance without rapids or falls past a broad, fertile, and densely peopled valley, lying athwart the great parallel terraces over which, ladder-like, the neighboring Congo has cut its bed on its way to the ocean. After many adventures, including a fight with a hostile tribe, M. de Brazza reached the coast at Landana on the 17th of April, 1882.

The valley of the Niari is the best line for a railway to Brazzaville or Ntamo.

Should the French choose to avail themselves of these discoveries, and occupy and hold the stations established by M. de Brazza, the political as well as geographical results can not fail to be of great importance.

The London *Athenæum*, however, asserts that the road along the Congo is far preferable to the route of M. de Brazza, which is considerably longer, and leads to a part of the coast where communication with the land is only possible in surf-boats, while the Congo is accessible at all times to vessels of the largest burthen.

Mr. Stanley has recently returned to Europe. He has now seven steamers on the Congo, and has founded four factories on ground ceded by the native kings.

STEARNS' EXPEDITION TO LABRADOR.—The Stearns' Expedition to the coast of Labrador, reached home safely, on the 12th of September. Mr. Stearns went as far north as Triangle Harbor, a few miles

above Square Island. A number of specimens of various kind were taken, but the greater part of the time was spent in hand dredging. The results have been sent to the Smithsonian Institution, and will soon be published. Mr. Stearns is about publishing a work on Labrador that will probably combine the greater part of our present information on that subject. It will be uniform with his *New England Bird Life*, the second volume of which will soon appear, and probably come out under the name of the same publishers, Messrs. Lee & Shepard, of Boston, Mass.

MICROSCOPY.¹

MICROSCOPY AT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.—The first meeting of the new section of Histology and Microscopy, during the Montreal meeting of the American Association, fully justified the recent action of the Association in thus enlarging the scope and prominence of its former subsection of microscopy. Large and interesting sessions were held on four days during the week of the meeting, and many important papers were read. Easily first among the attractions of the meeting was the presence of the honored leader in microscopy, Dr. Wm. B. Carpenter, of London, and many microscopists who have heretofore only admired his judgment and skill as an author, found new pleasure in his genial presence, and in his thoughtful, suggestive and conclusive remarks. His rational and conservative views in regard to angular aperture were received with evident approval by the audience.

MARTIN'S UNMOUNTED OBJECTS.—The unmounted material from the laboratory of the late Mr. John Martin, of Maidstone, England, has been forwarded by his family to the Natural Science establishment of Professor Henry A. Ward, of Rochester, N. Y. It consists of a variety of hairs, scales, feathers, spines, spicules, seeds, pollens, sections of skin, hoofs and horns, infusorial earth, diatoms, foraminifera, etc. The specimens are folded in papers, and packed in small pill boxes. They are offered for sale at ten cents per box.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— Professors Silliman, Johnson and Brewer, of the National Academy's committee on sorghum culture, have been visiting Rio Grande, near Cape May, New Jersey, for the purpose of inspecting Mr. Hilgard's sugar works there. They consider the success of the method there adopted, as assured. The sorghum crop has long been an important one in this country, and its true status will now be more generally known, through the labors of Mr. Collyer and this committee.

—Dr. W. Kowalevsky of Moscow is at present in this country, and is studying the fossil vertebrata of Prof. Cope's collection in Philadelphia.

¹ This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.